

October 27, 2003

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street S.W., TW-A325  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: ***Ex Parte Notice***

Federal-State Board on Universal Service Seeking Comment on the Commission's Rules  
Relating to High-Cost Universal Service Support and the ETC Designation Process, CC  
Docket No. 96-45

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On Thursday, October 23, 2003, Mary Mongold with Hardy Telecommunications Company, Michael Strand with the Montana Independent Telecommunications Systems, and Daniel Mitchell with the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA) met with staff members of Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service regarding the Joint Board's proceeding concerning changes to the existing universal service portability rules and eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) designation guidelines. Present at the meeting were Bill Scher, Vickie Byrd, and Elizabeth Yockus with the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau, Telecommunications Access Policy Division. Also present via conference call were Larry Stevens with the Iowa Utilities Board and Mike Lee with the Montana Public Service Commission.

During the meeting the group discussed NTCA's positions related to issues concerning the portability of universal service support and the public interest test for designating eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs) in rural incumbent local exchange carrier (ILEC) service areas. Prior to the meeting and conference call NTCA emailed the four attached documents that were used as an outline for the presentation that took place during the conference call.

In accordance with the Commission's rules, an original and two copies of this letter are being filed with the Secretary's office. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

/s/ Daniel Mitchell  
Daniel Mitchell  
Sr. Regulatory Counsel

Attachments

cc: Staff members of the Federal-State Joint Board  
Michael Strand